

Dear Representative,

I am writing to express the Montana Public Interest Research Group's (MontPIRG) strong support of SB 471 sponsored by Senator Brueggeman.

Alternative fuels have a lot to offer Montana, from reducing our dependence of foreign oil, to cleaner emissions, and reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere-the main cause of climate change. Additionally, alternative fuels provide opportunities for significant economic growth in Montana's agricultural communities.

Currently a substantial amount of our fuel is shipped in from outside of Montana, often from unstable governments. Moreover, all of our fuel emits carbon, increasing emissions across the state. In order for Montanans to personally reduce their carbon footprint they have to choose to drive less, purchase a fuel-efficient vehicle or purchase alternative fuel.

Yet when it comes to fuel, consumers do not have a way to understand the carbon lifecycle of that fuel. There is no transparency for consumers to understand where their fuel comes from, how it was produced and what carbon was used creating it. They do not know whether their fuel comes from a Montana farm or from Iowa. Whether it is ethanol or bio-diesel.

SB 471 addresses these concerns for Montana consumers by making distinctions between alternative fuels and where they are produced as well as calculating the full costs of producing and transporting the fuel. By having the state government reduce the carbon intensity of its fuel purchases the bill creates a transparent means for allowing us to determine which fuels have environmental merit.

Working at the campus level I can promise you that alternative transportation is the future for Montana. Students from all across the state are excited about coming up with innovative solutions to solve our energy and transportation problems. They host clean car shows, promote clean car technology in the classroom and study the carbon intensity of fuels inside the classroom.

Our state is at a crossroads in terms of energy policy and it is up to you whether Montana is leading the nation in efforts to promote low carbon alternative fuels or if the state maintains that same system that leaves Montana consumers in the dark. Please support SB 471.

Thanks for all you do,
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